(b) to (e) According to the information furnished by the University Grants Commission, requests have been received from time to time for setting up of regional offices of the Commission. The Commission had considered a proposal to set up zonal offices at its meeting held on 18th December, 1989 and constituted a Committee has been asked to examine the proposal with reference to the role and activities envisaged for such regional offices vis-a-vis the State Councils of Higher Education to be established in States. The Committee has not yet submitted its report.

NTR for missiles at Baliapal in Orissa

42. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Baliapal in Orissa was chosen as a most suitable place for National Testing Range for missiles but due to strong objections from local population the project wos not executed;

(b) if so, whether the present Government of Orissa has suggested any alternative sites for shifting the project;

(c) if not, what steps Government are taking for fixing a testing range site; and

(d) whether the missile development and testing policy of Ministry of Defence has undergone any change recently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) to (c) Based on the recommendations of an Expert Committee indicating Baliapal in Orissa as the suitable site. Government in 1985 had decided to set up the National Range there. The Government has received representations regarding the National Test Range at Baliapal and it is looking into them.

(d) No, Sir.

Falling of SLAB from Lord Jagannath Temple at Puri

43. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the falling of a huge stone slab from the top of Lord Jagannath Temple at Puri in Orissa, recently;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any study to know the causes for the falling of the slab and whether the ancient temple has started crumbling;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof;

(d) what is the periodicity of visits by the Archaeological Survey of India to ensure its proper maintenance and preservation; and

(e) what steps have been taken for the maintenance and preservation of this historic and ancient temple?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) Yes, Sir. A part of the amalaka from the top of Lord Jagannath Temple has fallen on 14.6.1990.

(b) and (c) The temple was examined in detail by the Expert Committee in July, 1990 with Special reference to the damage to the amalaka of the main temple. The committee have held that the following are the causes for the detachment and fall of a part of the amalaka, which is composed of several stone pieces: were (i) the inherent weakness and weathering of stone caused by salt laden winds, (ii) increase in weight of the emalaka due to the application of a thick coat of cement plaster in the past, and (iii) rusting of the iron dowels and the resultant increase in their volume. The ancient temple otherwise is in a good state of preservation.